East Timor Independence Centre

TL 3606

PO Box 9716, Wellington, New Zealand

Rt. Hon. D R Lange
Prime Minister
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

21 March 1985

Dear Prime Minister,

MEETNG WITH JOSE HORTA - REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR

Sir, I am writing to request that you meet briefly with Jose Ramas Horta, representative of the people of East Timor in the United Nations and elsewhere, next week while he is in Wellington.

We realise that this is very short notice for such a request, and that you will have a very demanding schedule before you depart for Africa next week. We organising this trip were given equally short notice of the opportunity.

We believe however that this meeting is important for the following reasons:

1. You, more than any other person in New Zealand, are in a position to help the East Timorese people. Your words, and your calls for action and justice have the power to have a considerable influence in the South Pacific region, at a time when the actions of just one or two countries will make a critical difference to the future of the East Timorese people. These people have undergone a truly colossal sufferring, comparable to that in Cambodia, but much less publicised.

2. Your only public statement on this issue, to RNZ in December 84, has been widely used by Indonesia in the United Nations, and elsewhere, as evidence for New Zealand's support for Indonesia's annexation of East Timor; and as support for the view that it is now best to forget the horrific carnage that Indonesia inflicted on that country.

   Perhaps most distressingly, your statement has been used to support the view that the sovereign wishes of the East Timorese people should continue to be ignored in favour of what is 'best for the region'.

3. There is still considerable military activity in East Timor. The topography of the country, and the strong support for Fretilin by the East Timorese, ensures that neither side can win the war. A continued stalemate will only prolong the sufferring of the East Timorese people. There is good reason to believe that international pressure and co-operation can bring about a negotiated settlement.

4. Because of your internationally publicised statement, and your particular position to have on influence for the good, Jose Horta has expressed a strong desire to talk with you specifically, if that is possible.

Prime Minister, you give every impression of being a man of great humanity, and concern for people, and for the underdog in particular. Your performance to date has given many of us back our pride in our country. I plead with you to make a little of your time available in the next week to hear what Jose Horta has to say.

Yours sincerely

Harry Bruhns

East Timor Independence Centre

PO Box 9716, Wellington, New Zealand

DETAILS OF VISIT BY JOSE HORTA

Schedule : Arrival in Wellington - Tuesday 26 March 3pm
Departure - Saturday 30 March morning

JOSE RAMOS HORTA has been Fretilin's representative at the United Nations since 1975. He has participated in all Security Council and General Assembly debates on East Timor since 1975. He is also a member of the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance, the highest military body of Fretilin. Along with representatives from other East Timorese organisations Jose Horta has travelled in Western Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia for meetings with government representatives on the East Timor question.

Mr Horta first came to New Zealand in 1975. He intended to come again in 1978, but the National Government denied him a visa, unless he agreed not to speak in public during his time in this country. After a major campaign the Government relented by which time Jose was unable to come. He has had several visits to Australia, meeting with government and opposition representatives. In July he met with the Australian Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden. He strongly disputes the statements by the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr Lange, that the human rights situation in East Timor has improved, or that there is no longer a significant war of resistance to the Indonesian occupation occurring in East Timor.

Mr. Horta is the first representative of Fretilin to come to New Zealand since Indonesia invaded his Country nearly ten years ago..

At the present, it is hoped that Mr. Horta will meet with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. O'Flynn and members of the Caucus External Relations Committee. Mr Horta will be given extensive media coverage whilst in New Zealand, and will speak to a number of representatives of Church and Human Rights groups.

Contacts: Harry Bruhns 721-000 Ext. 965 (messages to Ext. 961 or nos. below)

Colin Iles 849-103
850-104
} Jose Ramos Horta may be contacted for comment via these two numbers.

Messages to ph 850-104 or 2 Stafford St, Wellington 1.

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"I ask Monsignor to continue to pray for us and to make an appeal to the free world to open its eyes to the barbarities of which the Indonesians are capable"..... Monsignor Belo - Bishop of Dili (Jan 1984)

"...and pray for and end to the sufferring in our land."
..... Monsignor Belo (December 1984).

"I submit that any negotiations that do not include representatives of the Timorese people will fail to produce a lasting solution to the East Timor problem"..... Lord Avebury, Chairperson, British Parliamentary Human Rights Group (August 1984).